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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
14 August 1953

COMMENT ON THE SITUATION IN MOROCCO

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[Redacted] a sharp rise of tension as a result of El Glaoui's machinations against the sultan, moderate and able Sidi Mohammed Ben Youssef. Various local French officials, most of the French settlers, and the head of the largest religious brotherhood in Morocco are supporting El Glaoui, tribal chieftain of southern Morocco, who is apparently determined to enthrone Moulay Arafa, the pro-French cousin of the sultan.

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The reigning sultan, [Redacted] holds the allegiance of the majority of the native population. [Redacted]

[Redacted] In this unsettled atmosphere, widespread disturbances between the rival factions are likely, particularly in the cities.

The French Foreign Ministry has in the past opposed deposition of the sultan. There is no report that it has changed its position on this matter. France is able to maintain the sultan since its security forces in Morocco number about 56,000 and are adequate to take care of the present emergency.

A possible solution of the long-standing sultan-El Glaoui controversy, the division of Morocco into two states headed by the sultan and the Glaoui nominee, has been suggested in the past by the Residency General. There is no indication that this is acceptable to Paris.

Neither the deposition of the sultan nor the division of Morocco would benefit long-term French interests; neither action would produce a more stable local situation.

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